

2. MEDALS.

The commemorative awards for the present war are—

1914 Star ...	For service on the Western Front between the 5th August and the 22nd October, 1914.
Clasp to 1914 Star ...	For actual service in action and under fire between the 5th August and the 22nd October, 1914.
1914–15 Star ...	British War Medal.
Victory Medal ...	Oak-leaf Emblem.

The Oak-leaf Emblem is to be worn on the riband of the Victory Medal by officers and other ranks who have been mentioned one or more times in the despatches of a Military Commander in the field.

Of these awards the issue of the 1914–15 Star is nearly completed; the British War Medals have been shipped from England, and steps will be taken to issue them as expeditiously as possible.

The work entailed in connection with the issue of medals is very detailed, and includes all questions connected with the awards, investigation of claims, engraving, issue, and despatch of medals. Each medal, before being issued, is engraved by means of a special machine similar to that in use by the British authorities. As a result of the mass of detailed work in connection with the issue of medals a special section of the Record Office, consisting of eighty-two clerks, has been set up. This section will be busily employed for some months to come.

3. PLAQUES AND SCROLLS.

Plaques and scrolls have been authorized by His Majesty the King to be issued to the next-of-kin of deceased soldiers. These are being issued through the War Office authorities, and notification has been received that they will be despatched from England at an early date. On arrival they will at once be distributed from the N.Z.E.F. Record Office.

4. ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATES.

The New Zealand Government having decided to present an illuminated certificate of honourable service to each of its soldiers who served in the Great War, competitive designs were called for, and as a result suitable designs by New Zealand artists have been secured, and are now in the hands of the Government Printer for reproduction.

5. WAR ACCOUNTS.

The War Expenses Branch of the Defence Department has during the past year been placed under the personal direction of Lieut.-Colonel J. Hutchen, C.M.G., C.B.E., whose experience as Chief Paymaster of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force overseas has given him an intimate knowledge of the N.Z.E.F. and of all the financial transactions between the New Zealand and Imperial Governments in connection with the war.

Although the work has been exceptionally heavy during the past year, it is now rapidly diminishing, and the staff employed, which numbered 480 at the 31st December last, has been reduced to 197 at the present time.

Up to the 30th April, 1919, the total number of officers and other ranks of the Expeditionary Force discharged in New Zealand was 40,081, whilst during the year under review the number discharged was 39,044, being practically equivalent to the total for the whole previous period of the war. The prompt settlement of the pay accounts of those discharged which was aimed at by the Staff necessitated the work being carried on at high pressure.

The payment of the various retrospective allowances approved during the year, as well as gratuities and the difference between Territorial and Expeditionary Force rates of pay for the first month in camp, has thrown a heavy burden on the Staff, especially in view of the enormous number of applications being received almost simultaneously.

These applications having now been dealt with, a thorough search of all soldiers' ledger accounts will be undertaken with a view to getting into touch with those concerned where any allowances or gratuity payable have not been applied for, so as to ensure that each soldier will receive all payments that he is entitled to.

6. SEPARATION AND CHILDREN'S ALLOWANCES.

Originally these were payable from the 1st June, 1915, the rates then approved being 1s. per diem for wives or guardians of motherless children and 6d. per diem for each child. These rates were subsequently increased from time to time, until at the beginning of 1918 the allowance payable to wives or guardians of motherless children of warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the N.Z.E.F. was 3s. per diem, and the allowance in respect of each child 1s. 6d. per diem; but the various increases took effect only from the dates they were approved of.

During the past year Cabinet approved of the higher rates then in force being made retrospective to the beginning of the war within periods of service with the N.Z.E.F. so far as soldiers who left New Zealand for overseas service are concerned.

It was estimated that the total amount necessary to bring previous payments up to the higher scale would be—Additional separation allowance, £495,000; additional children's allowance, £249,000. Payments actually made to date total—Additional separation allowance, £458,752 7s. 10d.; additional children's allowance, £238,272 19s. 9d.

7. WIDOWED MOTHERS' AND DEPENDANTS' ALLOWANCES.

During the year provision was made to permit of the rate of allowance which was previously in force—i.e., 1s. per diem up to the 31st December, 1917, and 1s. 6d. per diem from the 1st January, 1918—being increased to a maximum of 3s. per diem within periods of service from the beginning of the war for the widowed mothers or other dependants of warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the N.Z.E.F., where the allowance already paid had not been